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Publishes 'Anatomy of a Slander' on Pope Shooting Claims

VIENNA, Austria

Bulgaria's official news agency BTA has published a 72-page document outlining Western reports of the so-called "Bulgarian connection" to the shooting of Pope John Paul II, the agency said Tuesday.

"Through this publication the Bulgarian Telegraph Agency wants to make the public familiar with the stages of the anti-Bulgarian and anti-socialist campaign in greater details," BTA said.

"Anatomy of a Slander" was the title of the report, 30,000 issues of which are on sale at newsstands in Bulgaria, the agency said. The price was not reported.

The document was the latest step in Bulgaria's campaign rebutting allegations that its agents were behind the shooting of the Polish pontiff by Turkish gunman Mehmet Ali Agca on May 13, 1982.

Bulgaria and some of its Warsaw Pact allies have laid the blame for the allegations on the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

BTA said "Anatomy of a Slander" cites reports of The Associated Press, Reuters, United Press International, Agence France Presse, Italy's ANSA, Turkey's ANKA, Turkish radio, Express magazine of Paris, France Soir, Rome's Repubblica and Daily American newspapers, NBC of the United States, West Germany's Deutsche Welle, Voice of America and Reader's Digest.